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Troubled Africa  
 Throughout history in the country of Africa the discovery of a valuable resource has spelled misery and bloodshed because the control of it has always strayed into the wrong hands. This is true with ivory, oil, diamonds, and many other resources. One may not believe that a country’s economy would be affected on a national scale but the verisimilitude is evident. Some of these resources have affected specific countries more than others, but each resource has caused death and hardship in many countries to both humans and animals. Many know full well that Africa is home to some of the weakest and poorest countries in the world. These battles over valuable resources have contributed much to the poverty. Many countries house fiendish, bloodthirsty diamond dealers. This has led the beautiful gems to be dubbed “Blood Diamonds”. Across Africa’s savannas poachers can be found killing and butchering hundreds of elephants merely for their valuable ivory tusks. The rest of their bodies are left to rot. Many African tribesmen have suffered and died in the struggle to protect these animals. Farther south, a resource sought by the entire world is found in the rich earth. Black gold, also known as raw oil, has been the root of many disasters over the course of history. It has been the cause of economic hardships in the United States and the fighting in the Middle East, but it has not hit harder than in the Congo region of Africa. Each of these natural resources has a problem that can be directly connected to the suffering of Africa’s people or its depressed economic state.

Sierra Leone, a small country in eastern African which is home to mostly black Africans, holds one of Africa’s largest natural resources, diamond deposits. The RUF (Revolutionary United Front) has incapacitated over 20,000 Africans so far according to Amnesty Magazine in the thirst for diamonds. In 1996, President Ahmad asked “to join hands in peace” and in response, the RUF chopped the hands off as many Africans as they could. The RUF’s main reason for occupying Sierra Leone is the large quantities of diamond deposits. The RUF use their guns and large numbers to create fear in the African people which results in very little resistance. They then enslave all ages of local townspeople to sift and mine rivers in search of diamonds. The mined and cleaned diamonds are then given to the leader of the local RUF forces who in turn hires carriers to smuggle the illegal diamonds. The carriers take the diamonds across the border to Liberia to be sold into the legal diamond markets. The smuggler of course gets a cut of the diamond profit. He keeps some of the funds, but the RUF get compensation by receiving weapons from the carrier.

This devastating effect on Africa’s people can be stopped by simply having honest diamond marketers in Liberia. The country’s economy also suffers because the diamonds sell for far less than the market price. This same effect can be seen in many other African countries. As one of the most sought after natural resources in the world the diamond trade could elevate the economy of African nations if managed honestly. The worst part about this situation is that the RUF has no care for the harm they inflict on their path to the next diamond mine. They have even lowered themselves to recruiting young children as soldiers. One such example is fifteen year old Jusu Lahia who was wounded in a battle fighting for the RUF. The RUF recovered the young boy only to tape his wounds shut and leave him to die with a tetanus infection in a remote hospital. Even to this day, the effects of the corrupt in Africa creep their way to America. FBI papers were leaked that showed that two Al Qaeda men who were involved in 9/11 were seen in Sierra Leone overlooking the diamond mining. This goes to show how the impact on Sierra Leone residents can reach even the farthest distances across the globe.